

February 13, 2014

Dear Senator Bye, Representative Walker and the members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Lee Fallet. I am a Connecticut resident and Mental Health Occupational Therapist and Rehabilitation Counselor with 29 years of experience across the service delivery spectrum. I am currently employed in the outpatient Psychiatric Department of a Community Hospital, service on the Board of Directors for a Community Mental Health Agency and am a member of NAMI-CT.

I would respectfully ask you to consider the following with regard to the Department of Social Services (DSS) budgets.

Please consider the proposal to **maintain higher reimbursement levels for primary care physicians** for Medicaid programs. Under federal requirements, Medicaid rates for primary care providers were increased compared to previous rates, but only until the end of calendar year 2014. After that, the state is now suggesting to continue these more adequate/higher reimbursement rates through the end of the state fiscal year/May 2015 which will still have a federal match but increase state investment. This will improve access to primary care physicians for Medicaid recipients.

Please consider the **addition of new staff for the department of social services**. This has been a recommendation voiced by advocates, including people directly impacted by the social services system, for many years. This will help to reduce processing delays for applications and redeterminations, hours-long wait times trying to contact the department offices and other access related barriers to receiving appropriate benefits.

I am **concerned about the impact of the \$4.5 million proposed reduction in cash assistance** in the 'Aid for the Disabled'

Respectfully submitted,

Lee Ann Fallet, MA, CRC, OTR/L